

A TERRIBLE SHOWING

A Hint as to the Manner
in Which Our Wonderful
Prosperity is "Enjoyed by
All Classes."

A reader of The Commoner sends a clipping from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, explaining that the situation described shows how our wonderful prosperity is "enjoyed by all classes."

Under date of Philadelphia, June 20, the correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch says:

Pennsylvania took the first step toward the total abolition of child labor, when the state factory inspectors were instructed to demand a birth or baptismal certificate with every minor's application for work. Thousands of children now at work in stores, shops and mills will be out of work. All are under 13 years, and each one represents a specific case of perjury.

The great textile strike now on in this city disclosed conditions that horrified every state official. War was declared on child labor at once. With New York, the state leads the country in the use and abuse of child labor. The great "black belt" of the far south knows nothing that cannot be duplicated in the mill districts of Philadelphia, and conditions up the state are worse. Nothing on earth is worse than the condition of the thousands of children employed in the anthracite mines. The reform will be made to prevent child labor from becoming a political issue.

Mayor John C. Delaney, chief of factory inspectors, had an investigation made after a published charge that children 9 years old were on strike with the textile operators, and that in some mills these little ones were sometimes compelled to work 13 hours a day. The investigation was made with a view to prosecute the persons who perjured themselves to get working cards for them. There will be no prosecutions. The children will be banished from the mills and sent to school. The next legislature will be expected to make it unlawful to employ any child under 14 years at any labor, and in every case a certificate of birth or baptism must accompany the application for working cards.

"I came here determined to proceed against the parents who perjured themselves," said Mayor Delaney today. "When I saw the wretched, sometimes starving women who swore to falsehood that their children might eat, I felt that something more sweeping than the punishment of poor women was needed. I caused a new set of rules to be issued for the guidance of magistrates and others qualified to issue working cards to children. I propose to hold all such persons responsible for every working card they issue. Parents hereafter must prove by living witnesses or by properly attested certificates just when their children were born. A complete set of records will be kept, to the end that no child under 13 years can work anywhere in the state."

"At the next session of the legislature the minimum age limit will be raised to 14 years. I am unalterably opposed to the employment of child-labor. I would fix the limit at 10 years, although this undoubtedly would work a serious hardship upon many. For that reason the age limit must be raised gradually."

The Worsted Spinners' association and the Cloth Manufacturers' association met and adopted resolutions condemning child-labor and pledging sup-

port to any movement looking to its abolition.

A sad feature of the situation is extreme poverty of families that will suffer most from the liberation of the children employed in textile mills of Philadelphia who are under 13 years of age. In the heat of the strike some of the labor leaders held these little ones high above the heads of their hearers and, baring their puny arms and legs and hollow chests, called upon the millionaire manufacturers to "cease their moral murders." This led to hiding of some of the horrible examples. Mothers who perjured themselves are in a state bordering on frenzy and many are in dread of being sent to prison.

In a single block in the Kensington district 14 women, mothers of 22 working children, all under the legal age, explained today that with perjury or starvation, the alternates, no

woman would see her children hunger. Starvation is no stranger in that district.

Organized labor will be called upon by the state authorities to co-operate in a thorough movement for the total abolition of child-labor. Pennsylvania will probably be the first state in the Union to make a comprehensive law.

Boston Sinking.

A dispatch to the Chicago Record-Herald, under date of Boston, July 19, says that Boston is sinking to the level of the ocean is the assertion of James R. Freeman, a civil engineer and former member of the metropolitan water board. In a special report regarding the proposed damming of the Charles river at Boston, Mr. Freeman says:

"All of the territory in and about Boston is probably slowly sinking relatively to the level of the sea. Apparently this subsidence is at the rate of about one-eighth of an inch a year, one inch in eight years, or a little more than a foot in each year. This is obviously a question

of great importance in comparing ancient surroundings with modern and in considering the possible future shoaling of the harbor.

"The datum plane of 1903, compared with that of 1830, the earliest with an authentic record, shows that the city has sunk .79 of a foot, which is at the rate of about one foot in 100 years. At this rate the present grade of Atlantic avenue near the foot of State street will be awash by the spring tides of each month about 250 years hence. Many rocks about the edges of Massachusetts bay are found to be from one to two feet deeper below extreme low water now than they were about ninety years ago. At many points about Boston tree trunks are found standing in salt marsh under conditions that prove a recent subsidence."

Reports are being received of serious rioting among the strikers at Baku, Russia, where it was recently reported that 40,000 men are on strike. Much destruction of property has resulted and in some cases there have been conflicts with the troops.

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